

CORE STRATEGY FOR CHILTERN DISTRICT - EXAMINATION

INSPECTOR'S AGENDA: HEARING, WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL (2nd session)

Main Matter 5 Green Belt

Participants should be available for a **1pm** start, but it may be a little later depending on the conclusion of the discussion on MM4 and the lunch adjournment.

This agenda draws on the main questions set out in the Main Matters and Questions 21 February. These are indicated thus (Q6.1). Additional, follow-up questions and comments are shown in *italics*. Not all the questions may require much further discussion.

Sub matter: MDS (general principles and non residential MDS)

Q6.1 Were any other potential MDS sites considered and rejected when identifying the 4 chosen MDS? Are the selected MDS considered by the Council the only MDS of strategic significance? Are there any comparable sites?

I have not seen evidence of any comparable potential MDS sites which would be of strategic significance.

In response to my previous question Q6.2, the Council accepts (statement CDC7, p2) that the Core Strategy should refer to the possibility of other MDS being identified in the future. Additional text is suggested in CDN117 to be included at paragraph 14.5. Does this suitably clarify matters? If so, I would regard it as a minor change.

As the Core Strategy is seeking to deal only with MDS of strategic significance and there would be the opportunity for other, non-strategic MDS to be identified in another DPD is any further discussion required on other possible MDS?

Sub matter: Policy CS23 Green Belt Boundaries

In the light of the Council's clarification regarding policy CS23, I have restructured the questions under this topic.

The Council has clarified that policy CS23 is intended to refer only to the review of the envelopes of settlements within the Green Belt, which are defined in Local Plan policies GB4 and GB5 (and shown on the Proposals Map) and which would remain in Green Belt? (Additional text and a change of title to the policy are suggested in CDN117). In isolation, this policy appears uncontroversial and I am satisfied that the exceptional circumstances test in PPG2 does not have to be met for this exercise, since there would be no change to the boundary of the Green Belt. Is it correct to assume that the Local Plan policies applying to these Green Belt settlements would be set out anew in the Delivery DPD and thus be the subject of possible revision and independent examination in due course?

Given the advice in PPG2, paragraphs 2.6, 2.7 and 2.11 (and the text in the box), exceptional circumstances are required to justify a review of actual Green Belt boundaries around settlements. Do such circumstances exist in Chiltern?

Would a demonstrable inability to meet the SEP housing requirement of 2,900 from non Green Belt sites provide an exceptional circumstance? If it would, does

that mean that Green Belt boundaries should be reviewed or is this still a choice for the Council to make?

If there are exceptional circumstances, should any Green Belt review include a review of Policy GB5 villages to see if any should be excluded from the Green Belt? If there are not the exceptional circumstances for a general Green Belt review, does PPS2 require a review of which villages are excluded from the Green Belt?

Are there any exceptional circumstances regarding the settlement of South Heath which justify a change in the status of that village in the Core Strategy?

Would any small-scale inconsistencies in the existing Green Belt boundary (such as not following a clear physical feature or cutting across dwellings or their curtilages) provide the exceptional circumstances for small scale changes? If they could, does that mean the Council is obliged to undertake such an exercise? Is the Core Strategy unsound by not contemplating such a review?

(The Core Strategy is not the vehicle by which specific small scale changes to Green Belt or other designations will be made to the Proposals Map. That is the role of the Delivery DPD. Accordingly, I will not be considering the individual merits of small-scale Green Belt boundary changes advanced by representors. But, in as much as the Core Strategy should establish the tasks to be undertaken in lower order DPDs, any intention to review the detail of Green Belt boundaries should be set out in the Core Strategy.)

Simon Emerson
INSPECTOR
30 March 2011